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N^o 11
Love and Unity essential to
CHRISTIANITY:

A
SERMON

Preach'd at the
Abbey-Church

I N
B A T H,

JULY 10, 1715.

For the Conviction of the Sedi-
tious and Uncharitable.

By JOHN CREED, M. A.
Rector of Buckland-Monachorum in Devon.

*Quid facit in Pectore Christiano Luporum feritas,
Canum rabies? Cyprian. — O felix hominum
gens, si vestras Animas Amor, quo Cælum regitur,
regat! Boeth.*

L O N D O N,
Printed and Sold by J. Downing in Bartho-
lomew-Close near West-Smithfield. 1715.

Price Four-pence.

FERMON

Printed at the

Abbey Church

IN

A T H



JOHN CREED, M.A.
of Balliol College, Oxford

Author of a Treatise on the Christian Church, &c.
and of a History of the Christian Church, &c.
and of a History of the Christian Church, &c.

LONDON
Printed and Sold by J. DODD, in Strand
near the Theatre Royal, in 1757.



A
P R E F A C E
T O T H E
R E A D E R.



THE Malice and Forgeries of some furious and uncharitable Men, who abound at this Time, obliged me to publish this Discourse, designed for their Advantage, though otherwise receiv'd: Unto which, the Approbation of many worthy Gentlemen, true Friends to the present Government, their Country,

A Preface to the Reader.

and the Protestant Religion therein established, was no small Encouragement. If Love and Charity, Moderation and Meekness, Peace and Unity, must give Place to factious Rage, Malignity, Hatred, Discord, Persecution, &c. farewell to Christianity, and the Benefits of it; we may soon hasten to the Dens and Caves of the Earth, and prefer the Society of Beasts before that of Men. I hope the Nature of the Subject, its Use and Necessity to Mankind, will make some Apology for the Performance, sincerely design'd, though imperfect.





ROM. XV. 5, 6.

Now the God of Patience and Consolation grant you to be like-minded one towards another, according to Christ Jesus: That ye may with one Mind and one Mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.



Although Peace, Unity, and Love, are essential to Christianity; yet there are no Virtues less observ'd at this Time, or more abused to the Ruin and Disgrace of the Christian Faith. Although our Blessed Saviour renew'd, enlighten'd, and improv'd the Law of Charity, made it the Sum of our Duty towards others, the Badge and Livery of his Disciples, and the Demonstration

stration of our Love to God himself; yet Men generally run into the most opposite Vices, as if Strife and Contention, Cruelty and Revenge, were the most indispensable Duties of Religion. In this, they resemble the crooked and perverse Generation of the *Jews*, who were mostly inclin'd to, and guilty of, that detestable Sin of Idolatry, notwithstanding they were forewarn'd against it, above all other Sins, as what would draw down the Vengeance of Heaven upon them. This therefore ought to be the Lamentation of every good Man, and raise in him the greatest Pity and Compassion for his Brethren, and at the same Time quicken his Devotion in their Behalf: For the promoting of which, I have chosen this Portion of Scripture, as the Subject of my ensuing Discourse. *Now the God of Patience and Consolation, &c.*

Which Words contain the votive Supplication of the Apostle for the Church then at *Rome*, consisting of *Jewish* and *Gentile* Converts; every Word of which carries with it a particular Force and Energy, agreeable to the Intent thereof. The Occasion seems to be this: — The Apostle had heard of some Disagreements-among them, both in Judgment and Affection. The *Jewish* Christians mingled Law and Gospel together, in the point of Justification; and so zealously upheld the Ceremonial Law, and the *Mosaical* Rites, that they opposed the preach

preaching of the Gospel to the Gentiles, except they would become Profelytes, and submit to Circumcision. — On the other Side, The *Gentile* Christians understanding themselves exempted from the Observation of the *Mosaical* Rites, used their Christian Liberty with *Offence*. To reconcile these Controversies, and to settle them both in Truth and in Unity of Judgment, or at least of *Affection*; this great Apostle writes this most Divine Epistle: In which, after he had laid down those positive Duties, in which the *Life* and *Spirit* of Christianity consisted; and in the *xivth*, and the Beginning of the *xvth* Chapters, used the strongest Arguments to perswade to Unity and Forbearance in indifferent things; he, in the Words of my Text, offers up his most affectionate Prayer for them, to this Effect: That God, who worketh Patience and Comfort in the Hearts of his People, by the holy Scriptures, would give them the Grace of *Unity* and *Charity*, such as Christ commands and expects from them; that all Strife and Discord being laid aside, they might with one Heart and Mouth glorify God, who is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

This being the true Sense and Meaning of the Apostle in this Text, in which he expresses the greatest Affection for that Church, and the Happiness of those divided Chri-

Christians; I hope that I may, without Censure, follow so great an Example, and safely lay down this Proposition, *viz.* That 'tis the Duty of Christians to pray for, and promote *Unity* and *Love* among themselves, although of different Judgments and Persuasions.

Now this will appear undeniably *evident* and *necessary*, if we consider,

I. The Nature of the Christian Religion; and in what it consists.

II. The great Weight the Scripture lays upon this Duty. — And also,

III. The Causes from whence uncharitable Contentions and Divisions proceed.

IV. And, *Lastly*, The evil Consequences of them. — Of these in their Order.

I. Let us consider the Nature of the Christian Religion, and in what it consists. To know what this is, we need look no farther than at the 17th Verse of the former Chapter, where the Apostle tells us, as well as the *Romans*, That the Kingdom of God, *i. e.* (as is generally agreed) Christianity, is *Righteousness*, and *Peace*, and *Joy* in the Holy Ghost; and that it is not *Meat* and *Drink*, or the like. Righteousness and Holiness, Charity and Peaceableness, Love and Joy,

Joy, and such like Fruits of the Holy Spirit, whereby the Mind is renew'd and chang'd, and made conformable to the Image of God, are the great things wherein the Kingdom of God consists; and in which the Life and Soul of Religion is found: So that, whosoever in these things (as the same Scripture says,) serveth Christ, is accepted of God, and approved of Men, *i. e.* in the Consciences of all considerate Men; notwithstanding his common Infirmities and Mistakes in other Matters of less Consequence. The Nature and Contrivance of the Christian Religion, as tending to Unity, will yet further appear, if we consider the Author of it, the End of Christ's coming, the Temper of his Government, and the Laws of Christianity.

The great God, that sent his Son into the World, to establish and confirm the Christian Religion, is styl'd, the *God of Peace*, the *Father of Mercies*, and the *God of Patience and Consolation*, in the Text; whose Appearance, *1 Kings* xix. 10, 11. was in the soft and still Voice. — His only begotten Son is styl'd, the *Prince of Peace*, and is the great Exemplar of Meekness and Condescension: He was usher'd into the World with this joyful Song by the heavenly Host: *Glory to God in the Highest, on Earth Peace, Good Will towards Men.* The Happiness and Peace of Mankind, and the Glory of God thereby,

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was

was the End of his coming; who accordingly gave a Law, both suitable to his Nature, the Design of his coming, and the Exercise of his Government; a Law of Mildness and Gentleness, of Condescension and Forbearance, towards one another; for the Establishment of which, the whole Tenour of the Gospel seems to be calculated.

The Holy Ghost, the Third Person in the Sacred Trinity, by whom Christ spoke, and the Apostles writ, is represented by a Dove, the Emblem of Meekness, *Simplex animal & letum, non felle amarum, non moribus savum*, &c. as Cyprian describes him. Hence, according to this Disposition of the Author or Authors of our Religion, the true Church is compar'd to the Lilly of the Valleys, flourishing in Humility and Meekness, and though amongst Thorns that scratch and tear, it has no Prickles for Revenge or Cruelty. The Members of this Church are, in like Manner, resembled to such things as are most peaceable and inoffensive, Sheep and Lambs, not Wolves and Tygers. They are in their Tempers like the Waters of *Shiloah*, Isa. viii. 6. that run soft and gently, and promote the Peace of the Church of which they are Members, while it is disturb'd by those that are like the noisy Waters of *Euphrates*. In short, The Laws of Christianity are such, that, when duly entertain'd, they produce the most gentle and good-

good-natur'd Principles that can possibly be; they take off Mens natural Ferity and Wildness, tame and fit them for Society, for the good of which they were design'd. Had Men therefore a right Sense of this Religion on their Minds; were this Gospel of Peace sincerely entertain'd in their Hearts, their Souls would soon be enlarg'd with an obliging Benevolence to all Men, and especially their Fellow-Christians. It would dissipate all narrow, selfish, pitiful Humours; purge out that Peevishness and Penuriousness of Spirit, contracted often by Party-zeal and Opposition; the mischievous Distinctions of Parties would soon vanish; and, according to the Prophecy of Christ's Kingdom, the Wolf and the Lamb, the Leopard and Kid, would lie down and agree together; Men would change their Weapons of War, and Instruments of Cruelty, Swords and Spears, into those of another Nature, for the Preservation of Life, and the common Good. Then *Judah* and *Ephraim* would neither vex, nor envy each other, but all would unite in one common Interest; and the Love of Christians would once more become the Wonder of the World.

II. Let us consider the Weight the Scripture lays upon this Duty. This certainly must be very great, since the Duty is so agreeable to the Nature, End, and Design of

the Christian Religion, as has been already proved. There is not any one Duty in the whole Scripture, upon which a greater Stress is laid, or which is made more indispensably necessary to Salvation, than Love and Charity, or a kind and peaceable Disposition; and, on the contrary, nothing more oppos'd and condemn'd, as most fatal and unchristian, than Uncharitableness, Hatred, Cruelty, and such Vices. Christ has made it the very *Badge* and *Livery* of his Disciples, to distinguish them from other Sects; and, to make us the more inexcusable if we want it, he has inseparably join'd it with the Love of God and himself; advanc'd it above Faith and Hope, and made every Grace, Gift, and Performance, without this Temper, vain and insignificant: He freed this Duty from the false Glosses of the *Pharisees*; and shew'd, that neither Enemies nor Foreigners, though of other Nations or Notions, were to be excepted, that there might be no Pretence left against the proper Exercises of it in its several Parts: And for Encouragement hereunto, in his Beatitudes, he pronounced three distinct Blessings, on the Meek, on the Merciful, and on the Peacemakers, whose Vertues are derived from the same Fountain; And that we might not think the Reward hereof peculiar to this Life, we are taught, by that Parable in the *xviiith* of *St. Matthew*, of the unmerciful Servant;

vant; and by that in the xxvth, of the uncharitable, That, at the Day of Judgment, those only of a merciful and charitable Disposition towards their Brethren, shall obtain Mercy, and be accepted by the impartial Judge.

The Author of my Text every where, as in this Epistle, opposes whatever is of an uncharitable Nature, and that in Thoughts and Opinions, as well as Actions, with respect either to the Bodies or Souls of Men; and therefore, with all Earnestness, he recommends such Graces as would, if follow'd, infallibly prevent it: Thus, Col. iii. 12, 13. *Put on (as the Elect of God, holy and beloved,) Bowels of Mercy, Kindness, Humbleness of Mind, Meekness, Long-suffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another:* Thus again, Eph. iv. 32, 33. *Put away all Bitterness, and Wrath, &c. being tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's Sake, hath forgiven you.* He tells us, that Love, Joy, Peace, Long-suffering, Gentleness, Goodness, are the Fruits of the Spirit of God, and the inseparable Properties of the Servants of Christ; to whom they are all united, as the Body to the Head, while they are knit together in Love, as Members of the same mystical Body; without which they can neither live, nor increase by any spiritual Nourishment derived from him. — It would be endless to multiply Places of Scripture in this Case; what

what has been said is more than sufficient for the Purpose intended. By which we may clearly see, the Necessity of a charitable, peaceable, uniting Spirit; that the Life of Christianity consists in Peace and Love; without which we vainly arrogate the Name of *Christians*.—The Word of God is plain: whatever Pretences Men may have for a contrary Disposition, Religion it self no ways encourages it; the very Nature of it being a perfect Contradiction to it; and a Man may as well reconcile the greatest Absurdities and Contradictions, as Religion with a malicious, persecuting, and uncharitable Temper. But the more holy and truly religious any Man, or Body of Men are; the more orthodox and primitive any Church in the World is, the more charitable and moderate, the more compassionate and condescending it is towards others: Without which Disposition, *Cyprian* asserts, we cannot enter into Heaven: And “for the Preservation of which, *Dionysius* of *Alexandria* writes to *Novatian* of *Rome* “’tis more glorious to suffer Martyrdom, than to die for not sacrificing to “Idols.

But that the Proposition laid down before may appear yet more evident; and that we may the better prevent the evil Consequences of uncharitable Divisions. Let us,

III. Consider the Causes from whence they generally proceed. 1st, They generally proceed from the Neglect of the most necessary Parts of Religion; and the Want of those Internal Habits and Dispositions of Soul, on which the *divine Life* depends. Were Mens Hearts more deeply affected with pure and undefiled Religion; would they more sincerely practise it, their Contentions and Disputes about it would find but little Entertainment. Were Men but more zealous after Holiness, they would soon become more like their Master, the Prince of Peace, who was meek and lowly of Heart: They would soon loath their unprofitable Wranglings; and that Wildfire of Strife and Contention about things of less Consequence, would soon abate and vanish. Wherever the Spirit of true Piety inhabits, and where it is entertain'd with most Delight, there other Matters have the least Share in the Affections, and Envy, Malice, and Debate, are the greatest Strangers; while Love and Charity reign in every Faculty: but, on the contrary, where there is the least Piety, there the Mind fixes most on meaner Objects; pursues them with the most eager Affections, and has the least Charity and Respect for those that do not the same; and the more wicked and ungodly, Men of any Party are, generally the more uncharitable,

ritable, cruel, and clamorous; for when Iniquity abounds, our Saviour tells us, *That the Love of many shall wax cold*; and, as a necessary Consequence, Contentions increase: This the Experience of all Ages has confirm'd.

2dly, Because Men do not entertain that pure Love of Truth which is requisite; but, in their Searches after it, and Debates about it, are too much prepossess'd and byass'd by Self-love, Passion, Interest, Emulation, Partiality, Pride, Vain-glory, &c. St. Paul, in the *Second Chapter* of his *Second Epistle* to the *Thessalonians*, foretelling the coming of Antichrist, mentions the Reason why God would give up some to his strong Delusions, viz. Ver. 10. *Because they received not the Love of the Truth that they might be saved.* And then, when strong Delusions possess the Mind, depraved Strife and Discord seldom fail. Peace and Love, as well as Truth, are depraved and prostituted; and Error and Uncharitableness are equally follow'd, by Men of corrupt Minds and vile Affections.

The sincere Love of Truth in Matters controversial, as it keeps the Affections free and unbyass'd; so it never encourages our unruly Passions, or unnatural Animosities: But it opposes those *ἑρμηνεύσεις*, perverse Disputings, which the Apostle says, *are of Men of corrupt Minds, and destitute of the Truth, supposing that Gain is Godliness.* We are assured,

sured, that *the End of the Commandment is Love, out of a pure Heart, a good Conscience, and Faith unfeigned.* The Purity of Heart, and Sincerity of Intention, in embracing and believing the Truth, seldom fail of being accompanied with Love and Charity, with Meekness and Forbearance, towards those they differ from; and especially if there be any Degree of Humility or Modesty. Therefore that Expression, *Ephes. iv. 15. Speaking Truth in Love,* is judged equivalent to the being *Sincere*, as in the Marginal Note.

Would Men but mortify their corrupt Affections, and cast away their Pride, Prejudices, and Self-ends, Truth would appear more manifest, and the World become more peaceable; Truth and Peace would kiss each other. But otherwise, while Men indulge those vile Affections, and do not endeavour after that *εὐλαβεινὴς διάνοια*, that *clear and sincere* Mind spoken of by St. Peter; and that *לב רחוק*, that *Largeness* of Heart mentioned *1 Kings iv. 29.* and that *נריכה רוח*, that *free and ingenuous* Spirit in *Psal. li. 12.* they will continually be tempted and inclined to make false Judgments, and to wrong their Understandings; their Faculties will be enfeebled; they will be narrow'd in their Principles, rugged in their Tempers, and Dwarfs in their spiritual Growth and Im-

provement, and ill-natur'd to all but those that are like themselves.

3dly, Another Cause of uncharitable Contentions and Divisions is, The perverting and confounding the Nature of things; or the not distinguishing between things of a different Nature, and regulating the Affections according to their different Circumstances and Degree.

By this Means, 'tis possible that Good and Evil, Light and Darkness, Truth and Falshood, Things indifferent and Things necessary, the Shadow of Religion and the Substance, the Form and the Power of Godliness, may become all one in Effect, and claim the same Value and Respect, the same Zeal and Resolution, in their Prosecution and Defence. But when Mens Minds are thus distempered, and, through Prejudice and Partiality, they come to value their own Notions, their beloved *Dogmata*, their *Idola specus*, (as the Lord *Verulam* calls them) more than they deserve; they almost inevitably transgress in all their Actions influenc'd by such Opinions.

In Religion, when Men use false Weights, and false Measures, and do not truly distinguish between what is necessary to Salvation, from what is not; and when they value things not necessary, as if they were; speculative Notions, as fundamental Doctrines;

ctrines; they usually create Oppositions, and run headlong into superstitious and uncharitable Practices, as is very evident in the Church of *Rome*. By placing Religion in that, in which it doth not consist; and usurping an Authority, which belongs to God alone, they deny others the Liberty of their Judgments and Consciences in such things, which they blindly judge Articles of Faith, necessary and infallible; and then they readily condemn and excommunicate every one, as an *Heretick*, that refuses to subscribe to that System of Divinity, framed in their Heads. From hence Feuds and Contentions arise, and must inevitably continue, to the Ruin of the Church of Christ, and the Dishonour of Christianity. Whereas Men would do well to consider, that those things which are absolutely necessary to be believed, in order to Salvation, are, in Reality, very few, and very plain; such as any well-meaning Man may clearly discover and understand; and which he will demonstrate, by their Power and Efficacy on his Heart and Life. 'Tis true, we ought to search for, and maintain every Truth; but yet, as our Assent must be according to the Evidence of things, without being sceptical and contentious in what is manifest, or dogmatical and obstinate in what is doubtful; so our Zeal for, or against Matters in Question, must

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must be regulated according to their Importance and Consequence; and always attended with Charity, the Bond of Perfectness, with some Grains of Allowance towards those, who are not so very quick-sighted as our selves. Otherwise, a Man may insist so much in Vindication of some Duties, as thereby to bring a Prejudice on Religion, and do the Devil's Work, while he labours to promote such things as are, in themselves, true and just. If we must always, with Rigour, insist on the ἀκριβοδίκαιον, the *summum Jus*, we may be guilty of the greatest Injuries; and the Law of God, which commands Meekness, Humility, Condescension, and Forbearance, become of none Effect. *Solomon* tells us, in some Cases, 'Tis the Glory of a Man to pass over a Transgression; it renders him like the God of Compassion, who relaxes the Severity of his Laws, and prefers Mercy before Sacrifice; who moderates continually the Rigour of his Justice by his Mercy, without which the World could not subsist one Moment; nor the best Man living, or that ever lived, escape the Torments of Hell.

There are other Causes from which uncharitable Divisions proceed, and by which they are maintain'd; such as a Spirit of Contradiction; a Love of Novelties; a contending for Victory more than Truth. The

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Generality of Men are carry'd away by the Names of Leaders and Parties, depending on them by an implicit Faith. Many are led by the *Names* of things through Prejudice; so that if an Opinion or Design happen to be misnam'd, it is immediately condemn'd, without any Examination of the Thing it self; for very few look into the Nature of things, and judge impartially. Errors and Heterodoxes would not appear so monstrous, nor our Censures and Defamations be so uncharitable and severe, if we were more favourable in the Interpretation of the Words and Actions of others: If we gave Allowance for the several Ways of Apprehension; the Prejudices of Education; the various Methods of Expression; different Words and Phrases, not alike understood, although perhaps intended to express the same thing.

Personal Reflections in Controversies, a most disingenuous Practice, usually kindle the most incurable Animosities. Too great a Severity in charging upon Authors, strange and absurd Consequences, deduced from their Opinions, though disallow'd, or not apprehended, doth often increase the Heat of Contention; which is likewise done, when, although the Matter controverted be great, it is driven to an over great Subtilty and
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Obscurity; so that it becomes a thing rather ingenuous, than substantial.

Lastly, Ignorance, and the Want of Sense, have no small Share in the Promotion of Strife and Discord; for (as a judicious Man observes) there are none more ready to strive, and uncharitably to censure, than the Half-learned and Half-witted (which are the most numerous, and most confident) Sort of Men, who steer, not by Reason, but by another Compass, *viz.* Faction, or Interest, or Affection, &c. whereas Men of the greatest Reason, deepest Judgment, and noblest Accomplishments, are also Men of the greatest Civility, Candour, and Ingenuity.

In short, whatever the Cause of Contention among Christians is, it ought to be avoided, and Charity always maintain'd; and that for the Reasons before-given, and the evil Consequences that follow.

IV. Let us consider the evil Consequences of uncharitable Divisions among Christians. As 'tis evident they proceed not from the Nature or Spirit of Christianity, or from that *Wisdom which is from above*; so we may easily judge, that the Consequences of them can never be truly advantageous to the Professors of that Religion. I shall but just mention these Particulars.

I. They

1. They are great Hindrances to a good Life; and are the Increase of Immorality and Prophaneness. This is too evident among us at this Time; wrangling Controversies never more abounded than now, which eat out, and destroy the Vitals of Religion; the Itch of *Disputing* is become the Plague of the Church. While Men are over-zealous *for*, or *against* lesser Matters, 'tis common for them to be luke-warm in true Piety, to forget the Duties of *Morality* and *Humanity*, and thereby to bring the greatest Scandals on Religion. For, as *Envy* and *Strife* have an evil Principle, *Jam. iii. 15.* so where they are, the Effect is *Confusion*, and every evil Work, *Ver. 16.* "But (as a great Man has observ'd) "the outward Peace of the "Church distilleth into Peace of Conscience; "and turneth the Labours of Writing, and "Reading Controversies, into Treatises of "Mortification and Devotion." This proceeds from *that Wisdom which is from above*, which, *Ver. 17.* is pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of Mercy and good Fruits; without Partiality, and without Hypocrisy. And *Ver. 18.* The Fruit of Righteousness is sown in Peace of them that make Peace.

2. Our uncharitable Divisions are a Disgrace and Prejudice to Christianity in general. By such as these, the Sword of *Mahomet* has prevail'd thus far, and *Alcoran* took Place

Place of the Gospel in so many Kingdoms. Hereby Infidels are discouraged from embracing that Religion, whereby they might be saved, and despise it as uncertain and inconsistent; nay, they may too justly esteem us *Barbarians*, and *mad*, according to that which St. Paul says of those that speak in the Church with different, unintelligible Tongues, 1 Cor. xiv. And thus, when Atheists and prophane Persons see such jarring Opinions, supported by violent Practices among Christians, they turn from the Church, and sit down *in the Seat of the Scornful*. When the Members are torn asunder, the Body must look strangely disfigur'd: Hereby Religion loses the Splendor and Glory of those Graces which most adorn it; Meekness and Patience, Humility and Condescension, Benignity and Charity, by unchristian Animosities, lose their *Lustre*, if not their *Nature*. Besides, the more furiously Christians contend, the farther they drive one another into Extreame; the farther from Truth and Conviction, and Christianity too; the more they disgrace the Cause they contend for, dishonour the Blessed Author of their Religion, and, like the foolish Builders at *Babel*, through Confusion and Discord, pull down what they pretend to build. But, as contrary to this, Unity and Concord, Moderation and Meekness, are the Beauty and

and Ornament of the Church; by these it is increas'd and enlarg'd, and becomes more perfect and glorious, as resembling *that* in Heaven, which is perfect in Love and Unity.

3. They are particularly dangerous and prejudicial to the *Protestant* Religion, as giving great Advantages to the Factors of *Papery*. These, we know, are indefatigable in promoting our Ruin by our Divisions, and at this Time, as much as ever; against whom our united Force is scarce sufficient. Those therefore that are come out of *Babylon*, should not be so unwise and desperate, as manifestly to weaken the *Protestant* Interest, by any violent Contests among themselves, lest thereby they expose themselves as a Prey to the common Enemy: The Enemy that breaths out nothing but Threatnings and Slaughter against the true Worshippers, the faithful Servants of Christ: The Enemy that greedily thirsts after *Protestant* Blood, and would triumphantly rejoice to see their Memorial cut off, that the *Name* of *Protestants* might be no more in Remembrance. Of this we have had the best Proof, Experience; and for this they now leave nothing unattempted: What they cannot effect by Violence, they plot by Subtilty and Stratagem; they work in the dark, if possible, to undermine and sap the Foundation of

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our *Jerusalem*, since they cannot withstand the mighty Force of that divine Truth that surrounds it; and (which they have been too successful in) they labour (like Satan) to make us our own Destroyers, by Feuds and Animosities; which, besides their fatal Tendency, give Advantage to all their other Projects. Like that grand Deceiver, they use such sly Suggestions and crafty Insinuations, as are most agreeable to the Distemper of the Mind, which are most apt to excite the Affections, and exasperate the Passions of one against the other, that so both may fall an easy Prey to their inveterate Malice; which is with them *Meritorious*, when to us most *Barbarous*. And while they are thus carrying on their evil Designs, they so disguise themselves, and delude us, as not to be suspected; nay, by some to be thought our best Friends. Strange Infatuation! But may God, in infinite Mercy, both to them and us, for his Glory, and the Prosperity of his Church, *abate their Pride, assuage their Malice, and confound their Devices.*

4. And, *Lastly*, Uncharitable Contentions and Divisions are pernicious to the Peace and Prosperity of the State. 'Tis a most infallible Maxim, confirm'd by numerous Examples, That a Church or *Kingdom* divided against it self, cannot long stand, or flourish; the Justice of God permitting its

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Desolation. As in natural, so in political Bodies, the closest and most perfect Union of Parts, makes the firmest and most durable Composition; and in both, the firmest Constitution is weaken'd and destroy'd, by loosening and dissolving Principles. Now all the Contrivances imaginable for the Happiness of Societies, which promote not Unity; and all Endeavours for Unity, which prevent or discourage mutual Love and Affection, are vain, as well as sinful. From whence we may conclude, That mutual Condescension and Forbearance of Men, or Parties, towards one another, in things about which they differ, being under the same Government, is necessary for this End; for, it being almost impossible, that all Men should agree in the same Apprehensions and Opinions, considering the Prejudices and Infirmities our Judgments are naturally subject to; if every Point of Difference should be carry'd to the utmost Extremity, Violence and Rage, Confusion and civil Broils, can never cease: And that Truth and Justice, seemingly contended for on both Sides, would, at last, be destroy'd; Men would grow wild and savage, and the Benefits of Society would be lost; for promoting which Christianity was design'd, and has given us so many excellent Vertues conducive thereunto.

These, and many more, are the evil Consequences of uncharitable Divisions among Christians, which the Time will not permit me to mention. From what has been said, we may easily conclude, That 'tis the Duty of every Christian to pray for, and promote Unity and Love; *the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace*. For this, we have the most express Commands in Scripture; the Love and Honour of God and Christ constrain us; the Love of our own, and our Neighbours Souls, the Interest of Religion, the Prosperity of the Church, and the Happiness of Societies, are the strongest Motives.

Thus I have finish'd those *Four* Particulars I propos'd to speak to, for the Confirmation and Enforcement of the Doctrine laid down. I hope my Zeal for Peace, Moderation, and Unity, in what I have said on this Subject, has not made me say any thing contrary to Truth, Reason, or Scripture; I am sure, I intended not to offend the meanest Christian, or the most uncharitable.

Were the Saviour of the World to come into it again, no doubt, He would preach the same Doctrine again, of the most extensive Love and Charity; and upbraid us for the Neglect of his first Commands: He would not profess Himself of this, or t'other Party, but scourge some of all Denominations,

ons, with the most just Reproofs for their wicked Animosities, and their selfish, mercenary Practices in Religion: He might weep over *Christendom*, as He once did over *Jerusalem*, and lament our Obstinacy against his Doctrine, and our Unwillingness to be gathered together by Him under his Wings. *Who hath required these things at your Hands*, might be said to many? But where is that Love, which I made the Badge of my Disciples? That Meekness, Humility, Patience, Gentleness, &c. which I so much recommended, both by Precept and Example? In vain, without this, was my Blood shed; in vain do you profess to believe in Me; and in vain is all that a-do, that false Zeal and religious Frenzy, but to increase your Condemnation: He might say unto some of us, I deliver'd you the Gospel of Peace and Love; but lo! you have made it a Book of Contention, to justify your Malice and Wickedness, Cruelty and Revenge.

Were St. Paul to rise from the Dead, how should we hear him repeating, with double Energy, and holy Zeal, what he has already writ to the *Romans*, *Corinthians*, *Galatians*, and *Ephesians*, about their Divisions, with many Aggravations? How would he intreat us, with all the Force of Perswasion, and the most moving Com-
pas-

passion, to lay aside all those Vices, Pride, Envy, Wrath, Strife, Malignity, Emulations, Murmurings, Backbitings, Evil-surmisings, &c. from which arise so much Mischief to Christianity? But to provoke one another unto Love, and good Works only; and to give no Offence to the Jew, or the Gentile, or the Church of God.

With what Tears of Compassion would the beloved Disciple express himself: *Little Children, Love one another; for Love is the fulfilling of the Law.* But whether all this would signify any thing, were it to be so, we have too much Reason to doubt; since they have not *Moses* and the *Prophets* only, but these *very Persons* now speaking, in the *Scripture*, to little Purpose.

Such is the Hardness of Man's Heart, and the Perverseness of his Will, although Christ has died to reconcile us to God, and to one another; though He has broken down the Partition-Wall, rent the Vail, and removed all Occasions of Enmity and Ill-will; and, moreover, bound us by the most firm League and Covenant; incorporated us into one Body; and made our spiritual Union the Term of Salvation; yet how deplorable is the State of Religion! How is Christ divided, and his seamless Coat rent in Pieces? And Men love

Dark.

Darkness rather than Light, because their Deeds are evil.

I beseech you therefore, permit me, as a Minister of the Gospel of Peace, permit me to perswade you, by your Piety to the Church of God, by your Love of God and his Truth, by the Graces of the Blessed Spirit, by the Agonies and Sufferings of the Son of God, to be inclined unto, and to promote Peace and Unity, Love and Charity. — If there be any Consolation in Christ, if any Comfort of Love, if any Fellowship of the Spirit, if any Bowels and Mercies, be ye like-minded; having the same Love; being of one Accord, of one Mind. Let nothing be done through Strife or Vainglory; but in Lowliness of Mind, let each esteem others better than themselves. Look not every Man on his own things, but every Man also on the things of others. Let this Mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus. For which End, let us all prostrate our Souls at the Throne of Grace; and join in this excellent Collect of our Church:

O Lord, who hast taught us, that all our Doings without Charity, are nothing worth; send thy Holy Ghost, and pour into our Hearts that most excellent Gift of Charity, the ve-
“ ry

“ ry Bond of Peace, and of all Virtues;
 “ without which, whoſoever liveth is
 “ counted Dead before Thee. Grant this
 “ for thy only Son Jeſus Chriſt's Sake.
 “ Amen.

F I N I S.



Lord, who haſt taught us, that
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